
RADICAL CHRONICLE

RSS INFORMATION NOTICE

SUMMER 1998

YES, WE ARE FINALLY MOVING!

New Address

The Radiation Safety Staff will be moving to new office space in the Beltsville Office Facility on October 2. The new mailing address is:

**5601 Sunnyside Road
Beltsville, MD 20705-1500**

New telephone and fax numbers are listed on page 4.

Inspections Performed

APHIS

Phoenix, AZ
Ames, IA

ARS

Phoenix, AZ
Ames, IA

FS

Fort Collins, CO
Missoula, MT
Durham, NH
Rapid City, SD

NRCS

Peoria, IL

Orono, ME

Beltsville, MD

Brookings, SD

Sioux City, IA

Conrad, MT

Pierce, NE

Casper, WY

Violations Cited

- ✓ Radioactive materials not secured against unauthorized use
- ✓ sealed sources not leak tested at 6 month intervals
- ✓ Individuals working with radioactive material without receiving approval from the RSS
- ✓ Individuals using nuclear gauges without receiving HazMat (DOT) refresher training every 3 years
- ✓ Nuclear gauges transported without shipping papers
- ✓ Nuclear gauges transported without proper labeling
- ✓ Radioactive material transferred to another licensee without receiving prior approval from RSS
- ✓ Individuals wearing personnel dosimetry assigned to other individuals

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Tentative Inspection Schedule (September-November)

ARS

Miami, FL
Presidio of San Francisco, CA
Grand Forks, ND
Weslaco, TX

FS

Eureka, CA
Placerville, CA
Redding, CA
Sonoma, CA
Willows, CA

NRCS

Council Bluffs, IA
Tecumseh, NE

Inspector General Audits Radiation Safety Program

The USDA Office of the Inspector General began an audit of the USDA Radiation Safety Program in January 1997 and reported its findings to the Assistant Secretary for Administration in March 1998. Three Atlanta-based auditors spent approximately 8 weeks at the Radiation Safety Staff office in Riverdale, Maryland, and visited 14 USDA locations. The OIG concluded that, "the Department and the Agencies have significantly improved management of radioactive material ... however, management control systems need additional improvement to ensure compliance with Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Departmental requirements and for prompt detection and prevention of safety and health deficiencies."

The OIG found that, in general, Departmental controls over radioactive material and waste needed improvement. The OIG reported that locations did not maintain adequate control over radioactive material and waste and users did not comply with program requirements. The OIG

recommended that RSS develop and implement standard location inspection guidance; increase the scope and frequency of location inspections; survey agencies to identify all radioactive waste burial sites and conduct burial site inspections; maintain complete and accurate radioactive material and waste inventory records; develop permit termination procedures; establish timeliness and documentation standards for radiation source use permit actions and; ensure Location Radiation Protection Officers receive timely radiation safety training, are properly permitted, develop management plans for radioactive waste and conduct annual location inspections.

Some of these recommendations have already been implemented and RSS will notify permit holders and LRPOs when changes in procedures are needed.

Radioactive Material Inventory Audits

Accuracy of radioactive material inventories is important to the USDA radiation safety program to ensure that materials are being used only by properly permitted individuals and to accurately assess the potential radiation risks at our locations. The amount and type of material on-hand at USDA facilities is an item reviewed by the RSS and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission during radiation safety inspections. The OIG recommended improvement of inventory control and documentation in their audit report.

The semi-annual inventory summaries sent to permit holders for review and approval has helped resolve some discrepancies between RSS and permit holder records. To further improve the inventory accuracy, RSS will

require that Location Radiation Protection Officer's conduct the semi-annual, physical inventory of radioactive material possessed by permit holders and resolve any discrepancies with RSS. LRPO's and permit holders will be notified when this change will occur.

Radioactive Waste Burial Sites

The USDA buried radioactive waste (mostly in the form of laboratory trash) at approximately 12 sites across the country until regulations permitting these burials were rescinded in 1981. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission established new regulations in 1996 requiring that these burial sites be decommissioned. The decommissioning process developed by the NRC utilizes a screening methodology that determines if a burial site has the potential to impact public health and safety. The screening methodology is based on the total activity disposed of in the site and the potential for that activity to produce a significant dose to a member of the public. Sites that pass this screening will be released by the NRC for unrestricted use. Those sites that do not pass would require more detailed environmental pathway analysis and the waste may have to be exhumed from these sites. RSS' analysis of the USDA sites indicates that most will probably be released without exhumation of the buried waste, while a few of the largest sites will require removal of the buried waste.

During the OIG audit of the radiation safety program, records were discovered indicating that the Forest Service permitted Florida State University and the U.S. Air Force to establish two radioactive waste burial sites on FS property. The RSS and the FS are working with the NRC and the States to determine how these sites will be decommissioned.

If you are aware of a radioactive waste burial site on USDA property that is not on the

following list, please contact the RSS immediately.

Agricultural Research Service

Western Regional Research Center
Albany, California*
National Animal Disease Center
Ames, Iowa
Beltsville Agricultural Research Center
Beltsville, Maryland
Range and Livestock Research Center
Miles City, Montana
U.S. Meat Animal Research Center
Clay Center, Nebraska
Jornada Experimental Range
Las Cruces, New Mexico*
Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center
Fargo, North Dakota
Northern Great Plains Research Center
Mandan, North Dakota
National Agricultural Water Quality Laboratory
Durant, Oklahoma*
U.S. Livestock and Insects Research
Laboratory
Kerrville, Texas*
Grazinglands Research Laboratory
El Reno, Oklahoma

Forest Service

Forest Products Laboratory
Rhinelander, Wisconsin
Northeastern Forest Experiment Station
Delaware, Ohio
Apalachicola National Forest
Tallahassee, Florida

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Mexican Fruit Fly Rearing Facility
Mission, Texas

***These sites have been released for
unrestricted use by the NRC.**

How to Contact Us

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Our FAX number is (301) 504-2450

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